DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 675 HE 022 780

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TITLE Selecting an Organization: How College Graduates Choose a Job.
INSTITUTION Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Collegiate Employment Research Dept.
PUB DATE 15 Feb 89
NOTE 31p.
AVAILABLE FROM Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Career Development and Placement Services, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1113 ($6.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; *College Graduates; *Decision Making; Education Work Relationship; *Employment Opportunities; Higher Education; Job Search Methods; Organizational Climate; Outcomes of Education; Personality; Predictor Variables; Recruitment

ABSTRACT

Results are presented from a study examining the organizational decision process used by graduating students to select an organization for which to work. Since college recruitment efforts provide more than 50% of the new qualified individuals hired each year, a better understanding is needed of how these students make the decision. The study involved 100 graduating students randomly assigned to one of two test groups. The first group was given measurement instruments that examined how subject factors (personality dimensions) influenced the selection process. The other group evaluated objective factors (e.g., salary, promotions, and job location as to their impact on the selection. Highlights of the study include the following: results from both the subjective and objective tests do not strongly support either approach to organizataional selection; graduates often have to select from a pool of companies that may not represent their preferred choices, so the final selection is made from organizations that may not closely match their personality, needs, and desires; an educational process takes place during the interview process; and the final selection is strongly influenced by job characteristics. An appendix shows personality dimensions used in the subjective choice measurement. Contains 19 references. (SM)

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Executive Summary

Several decades of research have focused on various aspects of the process by which an individual selects an occupation or career. Little effort has been made, however, to investigate how an individual selects one organization over another. The decision process for selecting a company is important for corporations because the long-term viability of a corporation depends on its ability to attract new talent. Since college recruitment efforts provide more than 50% of the new qualified individuals hired each year, a better understanding of how graduating students select an organization for which to work is necessary. This report presents results from a study that attempted to examine this organizational decision process.

One hundred (100) graduating students agreed to participate in this study, which tracked them through the interview process. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two test groups. The first group was given measurement instruments that examined how subject factors (personality dimensions) influenced the selection process. The other group evaluated objective factors (e.g. salary, promotions, and job location) as to their impact on the selection.

The final sample size was much smaller than expected because of a very tight job market in 1986. Corporate

restructuring (down-sizing) caused delays in companies extending job offers, as long as eight months. Nearly half the participants in this study were affected, resulting in changes in their career plans. Some graduates decided to pursue additional education while others accepted employment with family, relatives, or friends -- positions that were not originally evaluated in this study and often did not involve interviews.

Nevertheless, some useful results materialized from this study.

1. Results from both the subjective and objective tests do not strongly support either approach to organizational selection. Students may be more emotional in the selection process than some observers have anticipated.
2. Graduates often have to select from a pool of companies that may not represent their preferred choices. They are actually making an optimal decision from among "second-best" organizations. As a result, the final selection is made from organizations that may not closely match the individual's personality or his/her needs and desires.
3. An educational process takes place during the interview process. Before interviewing, job-related characteristics are generally rated more important than company characteristics. As the job search proceeds, company characteristics play an increasingly more

important role. Applicants gain experience in retrieving, sorting, comparing, and evaluating organizational information that works into their decision framework.

4. The final selection, however, is strongly influenced by job characteristics.

For organizations seeking qualified applicants, more realistic information on their organization's image and the job being filled would temper the unrealistic expectations of applicants. Applicants can then make more reasonable evaluations of companies.

For graduating students, advisors need to prepare them for the laborious task of assembling information on organizations that they wish to pursue for employment. Applicants should go beyond the easily accessible company material to obtain more pertinent information on those aspects of the company that correspond closely to their needs and desires. To do this effectively, students need to be prepared with a job search strategy that includes appropriate questions. It is not possible to make superficial assessments and expect to find suitable employment.

An organization's ability to survive depends on the personnel recruitment practices that gather the talent needed to capitalize on opportunities presented to the firm. College recruitment has become an important element in many private and public organizations' recruitment programs. More than 50% of qualified individuals that organizations hire today are a direct result of on-campus interviewing (Bergmann and Taylor, 1987). Besides making a competitive employment offer, a successful recruitment program attempts to match closely the organization's image with the applicant's image. Proper matching leads to a stronger commitment to the company, minimizing the turnover of new employees. To insure success, organizations require a better understanding of the job attributes and the organizational image that a prospective employee considers important to the decision to select one company over another. Awareness of such factors can influence how a recruiting program is tailored as well as how the organization responds to questions and concerns of potential employees.

Literature on individual occupational selection has primarily paid attention to the vocational choice process. Super (1953, 1955) and Holland (1966, 1973) have developed models that researchers have used to investigate a variety of factors that influence a person's selection of an occupation. A central contention in both these theories of vocational development is that the process is heavily influenced by the

individual's personality. A recent contribution to the vocational selection literature has been the application of self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) to career choice (Betz and Hackett, 1981; Lent and Hackett, 1987). In this approach, the individual's beliefs about one's own abilities to perform certain tasks successfully are the key to career choice.

Considerably less research, however, has addressed the issue of organizational choice (see Glueck, 1974). Once the individual has selected an occupation, how does the individual select from among the several organizations that may extend on employment offer. Those researchers who have examined the organizational choice process have generally focused on the job applicant's decision-making strategies during the job search. Unfortunately, available information has tended to analyze the decision at the initial stages of the recruitment process --seldom have efforts been made to include later stages, particularly at the plant visit or when the job offer is extended. A closer examination of the occupational choice process may assist a company's recruitment program by providing college student views on how they select a company.

Theories of Organizational Choice

The job search process can be typically described as a series of individual and organizational decisions before the job applicant can select, and is selected by, an organiza-

tion. Behling, Laboviz and Gainer (1968) have discerned from the literature two theoretical approaches to occupational choice: (1) Objective Factor Theories (OFT) and (2) Subjective Factor Theories (SFT). These two theoretical approaches mainly differ in the assumptions made concerning the applicant's decision-making process. The basic tenets of each theoretical approach are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Implicit Theories or Organizational Choice

Objective Factor Theories	Subjective Factor Theories
Emphasis on objective measurable factors, i.e., Benefits, Advancement	Emphasis on congruence between person's personality and organization's image, i.e., Need for Achievement, Need for Power
Applicant weights and evaluates relative importance of factors	Objective factors used only to construct organizational image

Source: Behling, Labovitz and Gainer (1968)

Objective Factor Theories assume that a certain number of measurable, objective characteristics of (1) the organization and (2) the available position are evaluated in the organizational choice process. Factors generally considered could include salary, specific benefits, such as pensions, health insurance and child care, advancement

opportunities, job location, and nature of the work assignment. The applicants make their choice by evaluating the value or importance of each characteristic (advantage or disadvantage) among contending organizations (see Corren, 1962). By placing weights on measurable (quantifiable) characteristics, the observer infers that the selection of an organization results from a rational decision. Objective theories also assume that even though individuals may differ in the weights assigned to the various factors, the weighting schemes across individuals are fairly consistent. Behling et al (1968) contend that OFT's form the basis for the majority of college recruiting efforts. Companies present an image to prospective employees strictly in terms of objective factors.

Objective Factor Theories can be described summarily as:

> "The selection of a position by a college graduate is basically a process of objective weighting and evaluation of a limited number of measurable characteristics of employment offers such as pay, benefits, locations, opportunity for advancement, nature of work to be performed and educational opportunities. Although the importance of these factors may vary from individual to individual, there is a fairly consistent weighting pattern which, if detected and used as a basis for structuring the firm's offer of employment, will significantly increase the hiring effectiveness of the firm." (Behling et al, 1968 p.15)

Subjective Fact or Theories stem from motivational research that discounts the importance of objective, measurable characteristics for organizational choice. Instead, SFT's emphasize the applicant's perceptions of the organization's ability to meet his/her needs. The subjective

choice process has frequently been described as "psychological-advantage seeking" (Gellerman, 1964). In other words, each applicant has certain personality traits that lead to certain prevalent needs that an organization may or may not be able to meet. Candidates initiate the job search with preconceived opinions (images) of certain companies. They will avoid contacting companies that do not meet their own self-image and needs. Central to the subjective decision-making process, then, is the congruence between the organization's "personality" or image and the applicant's personality. Behling et al (1968) summarize the reasoning behind subjective theories:

> "The selection of a position by a college graduate is the result of a perceived high degree of congruence between deeply seated and poorly understood emotional needs, and the ability of the firm, or more accurately its image, to satisfy those needs for the individual candidate. The decision is not based upon weighting of objective factors in a pattern which is fairly consistent from individual to individual, but rather is made on a highly personal and emotional basis." (p. 17)

Behling and his colleagues (1968) offer a third approach to organizational choice that is not as theoretically grounded. Termed the Critical Contact Theories (CCT), this approach contends that a college graduate can not differentiate between organizations on either subjective or objective measures. Generally three reasons are given for this inability to make a proper distinction: (1) The limited amount of time an individual has with an organization does

not permit for an in-depth appraisal. (2) Most organizations are very competitive in their offers, minimizing any possible distinctions. (3) College graduates lack experience in making proper organizational choice decisions. According to CCT, the decision to join a firm rests upon the behavior of the recruiter, the physical environment, and the efficiency with which paper work is processed following the plant visit (also see Bergmann and Taylor, 1987).

Past Research

Few research studies have directly tested these theories. Tom (1971) investigated organizational choice using Super's (1953) vocational choice model involving the self-concept (a subjective approach). By extending Super's model to organizational choice, Tom proposed that the similarity between an individual's self-identity and the identity of the organization for which the individual would like to work would be greater than the similarity between the individual and an organization for which the individual would not like to work.

To test this hypothesis, Tom interviewed college students who were preparing to interview at their university's placement office. Each student completed two personality measures, an Adjective Check List (Gough and Heilbrun, 1965) and Study of Values (Allport, Vernon and Lindzey, 1951) for themselves, an organization for whom they preferred to work, and an organization for whom they would

not like to work. The results from the ACL tests supported his hypothesis by showing a significantly greater similarity between the individual and the most preferred organization than between the individual and the least preferred organization. Although the ACL was initially developed for use by observers to describe individuals, Tom argued from these results that the ACL could be adopted for use in describing the personality of an organization.

Glueck (1974) in a longitudinal study of graduating college students who were just beginning their job search found that students acted rationally in their selection of an organization. Each participant rated a set of objective job characteristics prior to starting the interview process. Ratings were obtained after each interview and plant visit and shortly after the employment offer was accepted. Three job search strategies were identified with students classified as: (1) maximizers, who undertook a comprehensive search involving a high number of interviews and plant visits; (2) validators, who obtained a second job offer to confirm their first and preferred offer; and (3) satisficers, who accepted the first job offer they received. All groups acted rationally based on their preconceived perceptions of what the work environment would be like. Satisficers displayed CCT behavior characteristics in that they could not articulate differences or collect necessary information on the companies. As a result, they accepted the first offer

they received.

Using expectancy-valence theory, Feldman and Arnold (1978) examined the motivation of graduate management students in selecting an organization. Selected job characteristics and organizational characteristics that had previously been shown to influence individuals' preferences were rank ordered by the participants. A series of exercises followed, whereby participants expressed a willingness to accept certain positions based on the mix of job and organizational characteristics. The authors found that self-rated scores differed from the statistical weights obtained from the exercises. Feldman and Arnold further suggested that individuals differed in what factors attracted people to a job. People apparently acted rationally depending on a personal assessment of their needs and desires.

Research by Moment (1967) and Nisbet and Grant (1965) demonstrated that the choice of employers was more likely to result from an emotional rather than a rational process. Little information or forethought was used by students when making their decisions. Random events and subtle social cues were suspected of having a much greater influence on a job search (Rynes and Miller, 1983).

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to explore the validity of the Subjective and Objective Factor approaches to organizational choice by describing how graduating students

make their decision. By incorporating both methods into the same study, the investigation can compare the appropriateness of each approach.

Subjects

In Tom's study (1971), the students were not rating companies that had extended them interviews. Since students do not always receive invitations to interview with their most preferred companies, a realistic analysis of the choice process needs to be based on the evaluation of companies from whom offers might reasonably be expected. Glueck's approach (1974) of tracking students through the job search process was perceived as more appropriate for this study.

Due to the complexity of the search process (number of interviews and plant visits), the sample size was restricted so that contact could be maintained throughout the four to six month process. Sample size restrictions and the homogenous group of students used in the study does place limits on the application and generalization of results.

Since it was important that the participants be in a position where they would have at least two job offers, only engineering and business students, graduating in Fall term of 1986 from Michigan State University, were recruited. Engineering and business were selected based on recommendations from Placement Services staff who indicated that these students typically seek employment interviews with several organizations and often receive more than one job

offer. One hundred (100) students were solicited and agreed to participate in the study.

Procedures

The study was initiated when the student signed up for interviews at Placement Services and was concluded when a job offer was accepted. Typically engineering and business majors pass through three phases in their job search: (1) initial interview with recruiters at the placement office; (2) follow-up interviews with selected organizations at on-site locations; and (3) the evaluation and acceptance of a specific job offer(s).

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions: 50 in the Objective group and 50 in the Subjective group. Both conditions employed questionnaires designed to measure the decision-making process used during the job search.

Measures

Questionnaires designed for the Objective group assessed the subject's perceived importance and satisfaction with fifteen objective dimensions of a job and the organization. These dimensions were: Advancement, Benefits, Company Growth, Industry, Opportunity to Use College Learning, Duties and Responsibilities, Location, Management Attitudes, Reputation, Salary, Company Size, Personalities of Coworkers, Company's Financial Stability, Training, and Flexible Hours. The Likert-type scale ranged from 1 = no importance to 5 =

extremely important. Prior to the start of the interviewing process, the participants rated each dimension as to its expected importance in their decision to select a position. In other words, the ratings revealed what the individual desired in a job and a company before encountering any specific company information. After each interview and at the conclusion of each plant visit, the participant rated each of these dimensions as to the level of satisfaction that would be obtained if employed by that organization. A final satisfaction survey was completed for each organization that extended a job offer. The satisfaction scale ranged from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied with a not applicable option available if the dimension was not discussed.

For the Subjective group, a questionnaire was developed that assessed the subject's perceptions of his/her personality as well as images of the organizations considered for employment. A modified version of the Adjective Check List (ACL), a list of adjectives used to describe an individual's personality, was the primary measurement device. The ACL is completed simply by placing a check beside an adjective if the word describes the individual or the organization. The 216 ACL items that were used in this study were reduced to 15 scales (Gouch and Heilbrun, 1965); each describing a particular personality characteristic (Appendix A).

Prior to interviewing, subjects in the Subjective group

completed the ACL as a self-description exercise. After each interview whether at Placement Services or at the plant, each subject completed an ACL that in their opinion best described the organization. This description reflected the students subjective perception of the organization based on available information and the people involved in the interview. A final ACL was completed for each company that extended a job offer. An overview of the study's procedures for both groups are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Outline of Procedures

Phase of Study	Objective Group	Subjective Group
Subjective Recruitment	Informed consent form Background information Initial objective questionnaire (self)	Informed consent form Background information Adjective Check List (self)
Phase I: Interviews at Placement Services	Objective questionnaire for each interview	Adjective Check List for each interview
Phase II: Company Interviews	Objective questionnaire for each interview	Adjective Check List for each interview
Phase III: Acceptance of a Job Offer	Objective questionnaire for each offer (accepted & rejected)	Adjective Check List for each offer (accepted & rejected)

RESULTS

Based on 1985 placement data and job placement expectations for 1986 that were made by Placement Services, our *a priori* expectation was that Fall term graduates would have adequate interviews from which two job offers could be reasonably expected. The students did have sufficient interviews, usually three or four. However, plant visits and

subsequently, job offers were not extended in a timely manner. In hindsight, 1986 was a year students had to wait an extremely long time to receive confirmation of job offers. The delay was traced to the restructuring that was occurring within many major corporations. Restructuring activities often caused organizations to postpone final hiring decisions. As a result, we observed changes in the expectations of our sample.

As the wait lengthened, some participants pursued potential job opportunities outside the placement office. Several participants accepted offers from firms that did not interview on campus and completed surveys for these firms. Other graduates decided to pursue graduate school options. While others accepted employment with family/relative run organizations, these organizations were not evaluated because job interviews were not required. The result was a smaller final sample that was able to complete all phases of the study. Completers totaled 20 and 24 in the objective and subjective groups, respectively.

Subjective Group

Nearly all subjects had at least two interviews at Placement Services and at least one interview with an organization away from campus. Of the twenty-four participants, only thirteen had job offers from more than one organization.

Our initial hypothesis was that a closer match would be

found in personality scores between the organization that the individual accepted a job offer and the individual's self-description than between the organizations whose offers were rejected and the individual. Factor score means for the individual (self), the accepted organization, and the rejected organizations are found in Table 3 for two groups: (1)those individuals who had a choice and (2) those individuals who only had one job offer.

Table 3

	People with Choice (n=12)				People with One Offer (n=12	
	Self Overall	Self	Accepted	Rejected	Self	Accept
Achievement	14.54	12.42	11.00	7.50 bc	16.67	12.33 *
Dominance	9.37	9.58	7.75	4.83 b	9.17	8.67
Endurance	9.96	7.58	8.08	5.92	12.83	9.50
Order	8.62	6.42	6.75	5.75	10.83	7.50
Intraception	14.75	13.17	8.33 a	6.33 b	16.33	8.83 *
Nurturance	13.42	10.33	6.75 a	3.83 b	16.50	7.00 *
Affiliation	22.21	19.00	12.50 a	9.58 b	25.42	13.50 *
Exhibition	2.42	3.58	2.17	0.58 b	1.25	3.00
Autonomy	3.35	4.58	2.58	1.75	2.25	3.00
Aggression	-1.96	-0.64	-0.90	-1.55	3.17	-1.08
Change	5.33	5.83	2.17 a	0.17 b	4.83	1.50 *
Succorance	-1.12	-1.50	-1.50	0.00	-0.75	-2.17
Abasement	-1.21	-1.67	-3.42	-1.42 c	-0.75	-3.33
Self-control	-2.00	-3.75	0.25	0.33	-0.25	-0.83
Self-confidence	10.42	10.00	8.50	6.00 c	10.83	9.75

Reviewing the overall self-ratings in Table 3, students have described themselves as hard working and goal-directed (ACHIEVEMENT); logical and farsighted while valuing intellectual and cognitive activities (INTRACEPTION); likeable, socially tactful, sympathetic and supportive of others (NUTURANCE); comfortable in social situations and adoptable to change (AFFILIATION); and confident of ability to achieve

goals (SELF-CONFIDENCE). They did not consider themselves to be aggressive, inadequate, dependent or inattentive people.

Students with only one offer scored themselves somewhat differently on the individual scales than students who were able to make a choice. A comparison of the two sets of measures shows that the one offer group scored higher on the dimensions that were rated highest overall. For example, the AFFILIATION score was 25.42 for the students with no choice as compared to 19.00 for those with a choice. In addition to the five previously mentioned dimensions, students with one offer considered themselves to be conscientious persisters (ENDURANCE); to be organized (ORDER); and to be non-aggressive (AGRESSION) in comparison to the other group.

Higher agreement between the self-scores and the scores for the accepted companies were expected a priori. If the scores were statisitically equivalent, significant differences would not appear for tests of mean differences (paired t-tests). Differences, in fact, did occur. Four scales for the group with a choice were significantly different: INTRACEPTION, NUTURANCE, AFFILIATION, and CHANGE. These same scale comparisons were also statisitically different for the group with one offer; plus, ACHIEVEMENT was also statistically different. In each case, the student's self-score was higher. Except for CHANGE, the significantly different scales were the dimensions that individuals scored themselves highest on.

A corollary expectation would find a greater difference in scale scores between the self and the rejected organization. Seven significant differences resulted from the mean comparisons. In addition to the four scales discussed previously for the accepted firm, ACHIEVEMENT, EXHIBITION, and DOMINANCE were rated significantly different for rejected firms.

Accepted and rejected firms were also expected of being rated differently. However, there were only three scales where important differences appeared. Accepted organizations were viewed as being more motivated to succeed and less aggressive then the rejected firm. The larger negative score for ABASEMENT among rejected firms indicated that rejected firms were viewed as less confident and unresponsive to individuals than accepted firms.

Objective Group

Participants in the objective group also had multiple interviews at the placement office, followed by several on-site interviews. Only nine of the twenty participants in this group had multiple offers.

Before interviewing, students rated the importance of job specific characteristics (J) generally higher than organizational characteristics (O): advancement opportunities, and duties and responsibilities were the characteristics of highest importance as was the organizational characteristic, management attitudes toward employees

(Table 4). It should be noted that all the rated characteristics were considered to be somewhat important (mean > 3.0) to their decision.

Table 4

Mean Objective Factor Scores for General Importance and Accepted and Rejected Organizations

	General Importance	Satisfied Accepted Firm	Satisfied Rejected Firms
Advancement (J)	4.55	4.30	3.88 bc
Benefits (J)	4.10	4.00	4.25
Company Growth (O)	3.55	4.35 a	4.25 b
Industry (O)	3.70	4.75 a	3.75 c
Opportunity Use Learning (J)	4.15	4.55	4.13
Duties/Responsibilities (J)	4.30	4.80	4.13 c
Location (O)	3.00	4.40 a	3.00 c
Management Attitudes (O)	4.32	4.58	4.62
Reputation (O)	4.00	4.45	4.50
Salary (J)	3.75	3.80	3.75
Company Size (O)	2.95	4.25 a	4.38 b
Co-Worker Compatability (J)	3.80	4.11	4.50
Financial Stability (O)	4.05	4.20	4.25
Training (O)	4.10	4.25	4.13
Flexible Hours (J)	3.05	3.63	3.13 c

J = Job-specific characteristics and O = organizational characteristics
a: Significant difference at .01 level between self and accepted.
b: Significant difference at .01 level between self and rejected.
c: Significant difference at .01 level between accepted and rejected.

The satisfaction ratings changed slightly after the students had interviewed and observed their potential work environments. Comparing the satisfaction of all accepted offers with the general importance ratings, thirteen of the fifteen characteristics received higher ratings. Comparisons of the means (paired t-tests) indicated that several organizational characteristics were viewed as being more important: company growth, industry, location, and company size. The two job related characteristics that registered a slight decline in importance were advancement and benefits. The most important factor, a result of the significant rating increase, was the duties and responsibilities of the job.

The ratings for the rejected companies also improved. Exceptions were for advancement (decrease was significant), opportunities to use learning, and duties and responsibilities. Several significant changes, in addition to advancement, were observed. The organizational characteristic of company growth potential and company size were rated significantly higher. Other characteristics' ratings did not vary noticeably from the general ratings.

A final comparison was made between the satisfaction ratings for the accepted and rejected organizations. Five significant differences were found with accepted organizations having the higher ratings. Three characteristics were job related: advancement opportunities, duties and responsibilities, and flexible work hours. The other two were company characteristics: industry and location. The response patterns suggested that accepted organizations tended to be rated higher than rejected organizations for all objective factors.

DISCUSSION

Results from both the Subjective and the Objective tests do not strongly support either approach to organizational selection. Recognizing that the analyses were hampered by small sample size restrictions, several useful findings, nevertheless, emerged that provide some practical considerations for recruitment programs and advising students who are preparing to enter the work force. The failure to

produce significant results for either approach also causes one to pause and reflect on the methodological approaches that were used.

Unlike Tom's students who rated companies they would like to work, graduating students can only make their organizational selection from among the options presented them. Few students will have opportunities to interview with more than one or two of the companies they would most prefer to work. A recruiter from a Fortune 500 company will only interview 12 to 15 students per day on a campus visit, even though several hundred students may request to be interviewed. Further, the increasing use of pre-screening options by recruiters only increases the competition among students for the few coveted interview slots available. The probability of being selected for an interview with a major corporation is greatly reduced. An interview does not guarantee future consideration for employment; only one or two candidates on an interview schedule may be invited for plant visits and even fewer will receive a job offer. In reality, a graduating student may well be attempting to make an optimal organizational choice from among "second-best" organizations: the final selection is made from organizations that may not closely match the individual's personality.

Our test of the Subjective approach was limited in two ways. First, the ACL, as used to describe an organization,

may not accurately measure the personality of the organization. Students develop their perceptions of an organization from second-hand commentary, including friends and relatives, company recruitment material that may be very non-specific, a brief interview with a recruiter, and possibly later with other company officials. The time usually available in interviews and even plant visits is not necessarily sufficient to gain an in-depth understanding of the psychological dimensions of the organization. Thus, the student may be making the ratings on superficial impressions.

Secondly, response patterns suggest that students may not be aware of the subjective factors driving their selection. At the beginning of their job search process, applicants are inexperienced in comparing jobs and organizational alternatives. Once the search process begins, they obtain a better feeling for the job and organizational characteristics that will have the biggest impact on them. This information, however, comes in the form of objective, concrete aspects of the job and may not represent the subjective elements necessary for the decision. Thus, a high degree of agreement between the individual's subjective description and the accepted organization should not be expected.

Upon closer examination of the objective rating patterns, an educational process appears to be taking place during the job search. The general importance ratings

emphasize that the individual sought primarily job-related characteristics, especially advancement and benefits. With the acquisition of company information that provided a base for making evaluations, organizational issues began to appear prominently in the decision matrix while job related characteristics actually dropped in importance. Applicants, inexperienced in retrieving, sorting, comparing, and evaluating organizational information, simply need exposure to organizations before they could discern how different features of an organization may affect their satisfaction with a job.

Organizational image may influence the selection process during the interviewing process. However, the job characteristics reasserted themselves when the final selection was made. Clearly, both types of characteristics play important roles in the decision.

The education of the job candidate adds credence for realistic job previews, as advocated by Wanous (1980). In recent years, it has become clear that new college graduates have very high expectations upon entering their first job. Many times these expectations clash with reality, leading to dissatisfaction, lower productivity, and eventually separation from the company. To avoid potentially serious personnel problems, organizations may need to be more candid with applicants about key job characteristics. For example, if during the job search process applicants are apprised of

the advancement opportunities, they can evaluate the job in terms of a more appropriate (realistic) set of expectations. Realistic expectations may have been behind the shift in factor weightings observed in this study.

The comparability of offers between companies seeking similar graduates, especially engineers, also presents a problem. Organizations are aware of what is required to remain competitive in the recruiting wars; thus, they focus on those characteristics to be of interest to the applicants. As a result, the most important factors do not vary significantly between accepted and rejected organizations. Applicants may well be making their decision with assistance from other factors not included in this study.

These other factors may be what Behling et al (1968) have referred to as critical contact factors. Emotional responses could very well influence the graduating students' decision, rather than rational expectations, especially in a tight job market. Given the job market conditions prevalent in 1986, graduates may have had to act less rationally than they had expected.

In summary, applicants apparently consider both job and organizational characteristics when selecting an organization for employment. While the organization's image is certainly important, recruitment and placement professionals need to be aware that applicants are making the organizational choice within a positional context.

APPENDIX A
PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS USED IN THE SUBJECTIVE CHOICE MEASUREMENT

Achievement:	To strive to be outstanding in pursuits of socially recognized significance (e.g. assertive, self-confident, energetic, and ambitious).
Dominance:	To seek and maintain a role as leader in groups, or to be influential and controlling in individual relationships (e.g. boastful, confident, demanding, opportunistic).
Endurance:	To persist in any task undertaken (e.g. conservative, painstaking, and conscientious).
Order:	To place special emphasis on neatness, organization, and planning in one's activities (e.g. conventional, dignified, and painstaking).
Intraception:	To engage in attempts to understand one's own behavior or the behaviors of others (e.g. logical, thorough, organized, and industrious).
Nurturance:	To engage in behaviors that provide material or emotional benefit to others (e.g. cooperative, dependable, generous, honest, and sympathetic).
Affiliation:	To seek and maintain numerous personal friendships (e.g. adaptable,optimistic, outgoing, and natural).
Exhibition:	To behave in such a way as to elicit the immediate attention of others (e.g. active, argumentative, conceited, opinionated, and uninhibited).
Autonomy:	To act independently of others or of social values and expectations (e.g. arrogant, assertive, clever, and impotent).
Aggression:	To engage in behaviors that attack or hurt others (e.g. bossy, egotistical, headstrong, rude, and tough).

Change: To seek novelty of experience and avoid routine (e.g. active, changeable, charming, curious, original, and resourceful).

Succorance: To solicit sympathy, affection or emotional support from others (e.g. dependent, fearful, gentle, unambitious, and sensitive).

Abasement: To express feelings of inferiority through self-criticism, guilt, or social impotence (e.g. awkward, fearful, unassuming, and withdrawn).

Self-Control: (e.g. cautious, conservative, meek, peaceable, and unassuming).

Self-Confidence: (e.g. confident, assertive, initiative, outgoing, and talkative).

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